

4. *Equisetum debile* Roxb.

Found in river beds and other shady moist regions.

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29. THE TAXONOMIC VALUE OF THE ANDROECIUM IN  
THE GENUS *CASSIA*

The genus *Cassia* shows a great diversity in the characters of its androecium. These characters together with those of the fruit have been used in splitting this large genus into three subgenera namely *Fistula*, *Lasiorhagma* and *Senna* (Engler and Prantl, 1894). The subgenera have been further divided into several sections. Some systematists are inclined to raise the three subgenera to independent generic status, while others prefer to treat them under the same genus.

Detailed investigations by me of species representing all the subgenera have revealed a number of characters of the stamens and anthers which could be used to great advantage in the diagnosis of the various species. The characters in question pertain to gross features, structure and the mode of dehiscence of the anthers. Occasionally there exists a certain degree of variability within the limits of a few species but usually the entire androecium or some features of it are quite typical or characteristic of a species.

The taxonomic value of the characters of the anther, where they are widely variable, is quite well recognised in families like the Melastomaceae and the Ericaceae. Whereas in these families it is the different genera which show characteristic modifications of the anther and filament, in the case of *Cassia* such variability is well pronounced intragenerically among the different species. The following key, which comprises the thirteen species investigated in the present instance, is intended to indicate the utility of such characters for the purpose of the systematic delimitation of the species.

A. Stamens all fertile and antheriferous.

B. Stamens markedly dissimilar in length of filament, size and form of the anthers. Anthers